

1. (Currently Amended) A method of improving nematode resistance or tolerance in a plant and its descendant plants, comprising:
integrating into the genome of said plant a DNA molecule encoding a fusion protein wherein said fusion protein comprises:
 - (a) a first protein, or protein domain, ~~with~~ wherein said protein or protein domain has anti-pathogenic activity;
 - (b) a linker peptide; and
 - (c) a second protein, or protein domain, ~~with~~ wherein said protein or protein domain has anti-pathogenic activity;wherein at least one of said first protein or protein domain and said second protein or protein domain has proteinase inhibitor activity, thus producing a plant with improved nematode resistance or tolerance and optionally generating a descendant plant.
2. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said fusion protein further comprises at least one additional protein or protein domain fused by at least one additional linker peptide to at least one of said first protein or protein domain, said linker peptide, and said second protein or protein domain.
3. ~~(cancelled) The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the proteins or protein domains with anti-pathogenic activity has proteinase inhibitor activity.~~
4. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said first protein or protein domain and said second protein or protein domain comprises one of Oc-I and Oc-IAD86.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said first protein or protein domain and said second protein or protein domain comprises CpTI.
6. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said DNA molecule comprises a promoter sequence capable of driving expression preferentially in plant roots.
7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the linker peptide comprises an amino acid sequence which is capable of being proteolytically cleaved by the plant.
8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the linker peptide comprises an amino acid sequence which is capable of being proteolytically stable in the plant.
9. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the linker peptide is characterized by comprising the amino acid sequence QASSYTAPQPQ (SEQ ID NO:2).
10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the linker peptide is characterized by comprising the amino acid sequence VILGVGPAKIQFEG (SEQ ID NO:1).
11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the linker peptide is characterized by comprising the amino acid sequence QASIEGRYTAPQPQ (SEQ ID NO:11).

- ~~12. (Cancelled) The method according to claim 3 improving nematode resistance or tolerance.~~
13. (Currently Amended) An isolated DNA molecule encoding a fusion protein, wherein said fusion protein comprises
- (a) a first protein, or protein domain, ~~with~~ wherein said protein or protein domain has anti-pathogenic activity;
 - (b) a linker peptide; and
 - (c) a second protein, or protein domain, ~~with~~ wherein said protein or protein domain has anti-pathogenic activity
- wherein at least one of said first protein or protein domain and said second protein or protein domain has proteinase inhibitor activity.
14. (Previously presented) The DNA molecule according to claim 13 wherein said fusion protein further comprises at least one additional protein or protein domain fused by at least one additional linker peptide to at least one of said first protein or protein domain, said linker peptide and said second protein or protein domain.
- ~~15. (Cancelled) The fusion protein encoded by the DNA according to claim 13.~~
16. (Previously presented) A transgenic plant expressing the DNA molecule according to claim 13.
- ~~17. (Cancelled) Use of the DNA molecule according to claim 13 to improve pathogen resistance or tolerance of a plant and its descendant plants.~~
18. (Currently Amended) A method of improving resistance or tolerance in a plant and its descendant plants to a nematode, comprising:

integrating into a genome of a plant a DNA molecule encoding a fusion protein, wherein said fusion protein comprises:

- a. a first protein, or protein domain, with anti-pathogenic activity, wherein said first protein or protein domain comprises Oc-IΔD86 or Oc-I;
- b. a linker peptide comprising an amino acid sequence characterized by at least one of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2 and SEQ ID NO:11; and
- c. a second protein, or protein domain, with anti-pathogenic activity, wherein said second protein or protein domain comprises CpTI;

thus producing a plant with improved nematode resistance or tolerance and optionally generating a descendant plant.

19. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein said fusion protein further comprises at least one additional protein or protein domain fused by at least one additional linker peptide to at least one of said first protein or protein domain, said linker peptide, and said second protein or protein domain.
20. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein said DNA molecule comprises a promoter sequence capable of driving expression preferentially in plant roots.
21. (Previously presented) The DNA according to claim 13, wherein said first protein or protein domain comprises Oc-IΔD86 or Oc-I.
22. (Previously presented) The DNA according to claim 13, wherein said first protein or protein domain comprises CpTI.

23. (Withdrawn) An isolated DNA molecule encoding a linker peptide, wherein said linker peptide comprises at least one of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, and SEQ ID NO:11.
24. (Previously presented) The DNA according to claim 13, wherein said linker peptide comprises at least one of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, and SEQ ID NO:11.